



OPINION

Feed The Hungry

"Parity Giving" is a bold tax-incentive plan to end America's farm crisis and help feed the starving of our world. This "zero-cost" amendment to the Internal Revenue Service code would allow special valuation of agricultural donations. The legislation is being pressed by farmers and others sensitive to starvation in the world.

John Arens, senior partner with Arens and Alexander, a Fayetteville, Ark. law firm that specializes in farm problems says the connection between starvation and America's farm crisis has not always been as obvious as it is now. "Through the 80s, my law firm has concentrated its efforts in agricultural law, helping farmers fight in the courts to keep their farms. Not until I sat at the kitchen table with Frances and Clarence Hopmann, distressed Delta farmers from Dumas, Ark., did I begin to realize that the farm crisis and the hunger crises were inextricably linked," Arens said.

"Through her tears, Mrs. Hopmann said: 'It just doesn't make any sense that 40,000 children die each day because they have no food — we grow rice — and yet we are told by the administration that we have a surplus and that we are not needed anymore; that we must lose our home, our family farm. There is something terribly wrong. We can't have a real surplus when millions suffer and face starvation in the world.'"

"I began to understand that a lasting solution to America's farm crisis would not be found in the courts or in modern farm subsidies. The answer was ancient: Biblical economics. Only when America empties its storehouses and feeds the hungry, would our farm crisis be at an end. When America does not give on par with its bounty — Parity Giving — its storehouses become artificially full, weakening its farm economy, the primary source of new wealth."

Frances Hopmann, another advocate of Parity Giving says: "With parity giving, America's farmers would no longer be driven into debt, disappointment and bankruptcy for reasons completely beyond their control. This country's well-tested and treasured system of family farms would survive."

The late Carl Wilken, noted agricultural economist and former editor of the Progressive Farmer magazine, observed that in years when farm income makes up at least one-seventh of the nation's Gross National Product, the nation prospers. But in times when farm income falls much below one-seventh, there follows increased

unemployment, high national debt and eventually the risk of severe depression. Will there be a great depression of 1990 as some economists are predicting?

Under the proposed legislation, Congress would set a parity value for donated farm products which would amount to the cost of production plus a profit factor. The plan, for example, might establish a parity value for corn at \$4.00 per bushel. If a taxpayer were to buy 100 bushels of corn at \$3.00 per bushel (current market price) and were to donate it to charity, this donor could value his gift at \$400, instead of the current \$300 IRS cost allowance. This incentive would encourage both corporate and individual donors to become additional buyers of America's annual harvest. The private sector would be enticed to participate in solving our farm/hunger crisis instead of relying on government bailouts and subsidies.

Any reported food excesses would be absorbed in famine relief. This practical alternative to "tearing down our barns and building new ones" to store our excesses would not only reduce hunger, but would also strengthen America's depressed farm prices and help revive the dignity of family farms. Eventually, commodity prices would increase to levels nearing the parity value because the "true value" of donated production — calculated by converting tax savings into increased worth — would give an upward buoyancy to all farm prices. Charitable relief organizations would then be able to use the bulk of their resources to transport and distribute the donated food and fiber.

It makes no sense that U.S. taxpayers spent \$5.3 billion in 1987 to store 10.3 billion bushels of corn, 1.9 billion bushels of wheat, 635 million bushels of soybeans and 235 million bushels of rice (U.S. Department of Agriculture) when even in this country some 20 million Americans go hungry for part of each month, according to a 1985 report by the Harvard Physician Task Force on Hunger in America.

Our nation can no longer afford to ignore the hungry and destroy our most valuable resource: America's food production capacity which is dependent on our system of family farms. As public opinion mounts, more will be heard of this simple amendment to the IRS code, which promises to break the unholy anomaly of hunger in the midst of an abundant harvest. It would finally signal a national response to the age-old plea: Feed the hungry.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin
Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

To Plan For Fall Wheat Seeding

The time is fast approaching for our wheat growers to be making plans for their fall seeding. In most cases, wheat was a very good crop this year but some local wheat may not be satisfactory due to weed seeds found in some fields. If you use local wheat, be sure you know the source and have it cleaned and treated for disease. Also, if you had a scab problem this year, do not plant wheat in the same field this fall; the fungus can remain in the soil.

Certified seed would be the best route to take if you experienced any problem this year. The extra cost for certified seed is well worth it to help insure a good crop next summer.

To Consider Alternative Protein Feeds

With the price of protein increasing, farmers and feed companies are looking for alternative sources of protein feeds. According to Glenn A. Shirk, extension dairy agent, one alternative is the use of non-protein-nitrogen (NPN), such as urea and anhydrous ammonia. When fed properly, ruminant animals are able to convert NPN into protein. Animals need to be acclimated to NPN gradually, over a period of 3 to 4 weeks. Initially, urea can be incorporated into the concentrate mix at a rate of about 0.5%, and then gradually increased to a maximum of about 1.0 to 1.5%. Or, it can be mixed at the rate of about 10 pounds per ton of normal corn silage. Another alternative is to mix about 7 pounds of anhydrous ammonia per ton of silage. If NPN is mixed with the concentrate, do not include it in the silage. Neither should NPN be used on immature, drought-stricken corn silage.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, August 6
1988 PA Simmental Field Day, Windy Hill Farms, Titusville, 10:00 a.m.

PDA Performance Tested Ram Lamb and Ewe Sale, Ag Arena, Penn State, 1:00 p.m.

Bradford County Holstein Picnic Clinton County Fair, Mackeyville, through the 13th
Huntingdon Co. 4-H Clean-Up day, fairgrounds, 9: a.m.

Cumberland County 4-H Horse Roundup, Carlisle Springs.

Monday, August 8
Tioga Co. Holstein Show, Whit-

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To Check Silo Size
How much silage or high moisture corn must you feed each day to keep ahead of spoilage in the silo? The amount will vary considerably from hot days to cold days. Can your herd consume this much feed? The answer to these questions depends on the diameter of the silo, how well the feed was processed and packed when it was ensiled, herd size, feeding program, season of the year and type of storage structure.

If you are ensiling high moisture ground shelled corn in an upright conventional silo, you'll need to remove at least 2 inches of grain a day in warmer weather to keep ahead of spoilage. For a 14 foot silo, that is 1,400 pounds or more of corn per day — 24 pounds per cow in a 60 cow herd. If you are ensiling whole shelled corn or ground ear corn, the material does not pack as tightly, and up to 4 inches may have to be removed

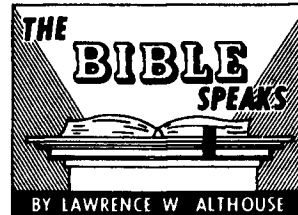
daily. Four inches of this material in a 14 foot silo is 2,456 pounds — 41 pounds per cow in a 60 cow herd.

If a limited oxygen storage unit is used, sizing is less critical.

To Renovate Old Pastures

Late August and early September are good times to establish a new pasture, or renovate an old one. In fact, this is a good time of the year to make any pasture or lawn seeding. The old sod should be destroyed by cultivation or by a herbicide. After the soil has been treated with lime and fertilizer, according to a complete soil test, it can be seeded and should produce good grazing for next summer.

The advantage of a fall seeding is to permit time for the new plants to become established before the 1989 hot weather arrives. The cool, moist fall months should give the plants a good start. The Agronomy Guide lists some good seeding recommendations.



THE PERILS OF POPULAR RELIGION

August 7, 1988

Background Scripture: Exodus 32.
Devotional Reading: Psalms 106: 40-48.

No public relations person would tell the story of the Israelites at Mount Sinai as the writer of the Book of Exodus writes it. As he tells it, just about everyone in the narrative is presented in an unfavorable light: the Israelites, Aaron, and even Moses.

Especially the Israelites. From our safe perspective of the 20th century, you and I can be properly shocked at the irresponsible behaviour they exhibit. Impatient because Moses has not yet come down off the mountain, the people of Israel demand of Aaron, "Up, make us gods, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him" (Exodus 32:1). God has brought them out of Egypt, freed them from the pursuit of the Egyptians, provided them with water and food for them in the wilderness and now, despite all of that, they are impatient and demand that Aaron provide them with idols!

THE WAY IT WAS

We commend the the writer of Exodus for telling us the way it was, not the way we would have preferred it to be. But we need to be no less acndid, for patience is no more a universal virtue now that it was in Moses' day and we, despite our pretensions, are probably no less impatient with God than the Israelites were. Who among us has not dispaired when it seemed that God was delayed in coming to our aid? Which of us has not grown

impatient with prayer that seemed unanswered and looked for help elsewhere?

People may be more than willing to keep the covenant so long as it seems that God is running his end of the bargain according to our time schedule. But, if God insists upon being God and uses a totally different timetable, how long are we likely to wait faithfully and patiently? Popular religion is always an impatient one.

In addition to being impatient for Moses' return, the people of Israel also wanted a god they could see, handle and maybe even control. It was one thing for Moses to tell them about a God whom they could not see, but they wanted something more tangible — like the golden calf that Aaron made for them out of their offerings of gold. You and I, of course, are not very likely to ask for a golden idol, but that doesn't mean that we are any less amterialistic in our religious outlook. We may say we believe in an invisible God, but we act as if it is only the material goods in which we can trust. Popular religion is always a materialistic one.

EMOTIONAL BALANCE

Thirdly, the people of Israel wanted to turn their religion into an emotional binge. The "still, small voice" within was not enough for them. They wanted a religion that swept them off their feet and turned their insides upside down: "And the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" (32:6). There's nothing wrong about sitting down to "eat and drink" or even rising up "to play," so long as we don't make that a substitute for obeying our covenant with the Lord. The problem is not emotion in religion, but emotion instead of religion. The problem is substituting excitement for obedience and faithfulness, of mistaking entertainment for revelation. Those are always the attractive, compelling perils of popular religion.

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